

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8942

S E C R E T ALGIERS 2308

EYES ONLY

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, AG
SUBJ: EMBASSY CONTACT WITH POLISARIO

FOR: ASST SECY HAROLD SAUNDERS

HAL, ON 27 JULY A LOCAL REPRESENTATIVE OF POLISARIO, MOHAMED ALI MOULOUD, FORMALLY REQUESTED A MEETING BETWEEN UNNAMED POLISARIO OFFICIALS AND ME FOR SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSION. REQUEST WAS MADE OF OUR VICE CONSUL IN CONTEXT OF MOULOUD'S VISIT TO EMBASSY FOR VISA TO ATTEND UN COMMITTEE OF 24 MEETING IN NEW YORK. THIS IS THIRD SUCH REQUEST MADE BY POLISARIO REP SINCE MY ARRIVAL. IN ACCORDANCE WITH DEPT INSTRUCTIONS, PRIOR REQUESTS WERE TURNED DOWN.

HOWEVER, GIVEN RAPIDLY EVOLVING SITUATION, COUNTRY TEAM AND I FEEL STRONGLY THAT TIME HAS COME FOR SOME OFFICIAL EMBASSY CONTACT WITH POLISARIO. AS PARTIES TO SAHARA CONFLICT MOVE CLOSER TO NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT, OUR ADHERENCE TO A POSITION OF NO CONTACT RISKS BEING OVERTAKEN BY EVENTS AND APPEARING PARTISAN AND UNHELPFUL. IT ALSO PREVENTS US FROM USING ANY CONSTRUCTIVE INFLUENCE WE MIGHT HAVE WITH THE MOROCCANS. FINALLY, IT FORCES US TO RELY ON SECOND-HAND SOURCES OF INTELLIGENCE ON THE EVOLVING SITUATION AND, THEREBY, LIMITS OUR ABILITY TO PROTECT OUR NATIONAL INTERESTS IN THIS MATTER.

AS MINIMAL FIRST STEP, I WOULD LIKE DEPT AUTHORIZATION TO DETERMINE
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WITH WHICH POLISARIO LEADERS THE DESIRED MEETING WOULD TAKE PLACE. THEN IF DEPT AGREES TO OUR HAVING SUBSTANTIVE CONTACT WITH THESE POLISARIO LEADERS, I WOULD RECOMMEND THAT OUR ROLE BE LIMITED TO LISTENING TO WHAT THEY HAVE TO SAY AND PASSING IT ON TO THE APPROPRIATE USG AUTHORITIES. I WOULD ALSO RECOMMEND THAT WE OBTAIN PRIOR POLISARIO AGREEMENT NOT TO PUBLICIZE MEETING. I WOULD FURTHER SUGGEST THAT THERE ARE THREE POSSIBLE APPROACHES TO THE LEVEL AT WHICH

SUCH CONTACT COULD BE MADE:

- (A) AT THE VICE CONSUL LEVEL WHERE A RELATIONSHIP HAS ALREADY BEEN ESTABLISHED FOR ISSUANCE OF U.S. VISAS,
- (B) AT THE POLITICAL OFFICER LEVEL OR
- (C) AT THE AMBASSADORIAL LEVEL.

LEVELS (A) AND (B) ABOVE HAVE THE DISADVANTAGE OF RISKING OFFENDING THE POLISARIO BY CONTINUING TO BAR THE ACCESS THEY SEEK AND COULD, THEREFORE, BE UNPRODUCTIVE. MAY I HAVE YOUR THOUGHTS?

REGARDS, RICK. HAYNES

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NNN

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